

IN THE CLAIMS:

The final form of the claims in view of this response are set out below. Aside from the cancellation of claims 1-15 without prejudice and disclaimer of subject matter, the claims have not been amended.

1-15. Cancel.

16. (previously amended) A gas laser, comprising:

a tube having a first end wall at one end and a second end wall at the other end, wherein the tube defines a cavity for containing a laser gas therein, and the first end wall includes a port;

an electrode system disposed within the tube for generating a laser beam having an optical axis extending longitudinally through the tube and passing through the port;

a mounting structure mounted on the first end wall of the tube, the mounting structure comprising an optical element receiving surface and an aperture extending through the receiving surface, wherein the aperture is disposed transverse to the optical axis and is aligned with the port and the optical axis so that the optical axis passes through the aperture;

an unitary optical element having a peripheral edge, the peripheral edge being substantially planar with respect to a first direction substantially perpendicular to the peripheral edge;

a unitary optical holder comprising a tubular gripping portion and a tubular extraction portion connected at one end to the tubular gripping portion and having a diameter less than the

tubular gripping portion, the tubular gripping portion engaging the peripheral edge of the optical element to retain the optical element within the optical holder; and

a retainer having an interior surface engaging an exterior surface of the tubular extraction portion of the optical holder so as to be slideable along the exterior surface of the tubular extraction portion in a second direction substantially perpendicular to the first direction, the retainer being engageable with the mounting structure such that the optical element is positioned against the optical element receiving surface to form a gas tight seal therebetween; wherein

the optical element is disposed transverse to the optical axis and the optical axis impinges on the optical element.

17. (previously amended) A device according to claim 16, wherein the interior surface of the retainer engages the exterior surface of the tubular extraction portion such that the optical holder and optical element are rotateable with respect to the retainer perpendicular to the second direction. [about a common axis, and rotation of the holder rotates the optical element].

18. (previously amended) A gas laser according to claim 17, wherein the retainer may be partially disengaged from the mounting structure such that the optical holder and optical element may be rotated within the retainer.

19. (original) A gas laser according to claim 18, wherein the holder may be rotated without breaking the seal between the optical element and the optical element receiving surface.

20. (previously amended) A gas laser according to claim 18,
the retainer comprises an externally threaded sleeve;
the optical element is substantially round; and
the externally threaded sleeve has an axis of rotation substantially identical to the axis of rotation of the holder and the optical element with respect to the retainer.
21. (original) A gas laser according to claim 16, further comprising an O-ring interposed between the optical element and the optical element receiving surface.
22. (previously amended) A gas laser according to claim 16, wherein
the retainer includes a first set of threads;
the mounting structure includes a second set of threads engaging the first set of threads to removeably engage the retainer and the mounting structure.
23. (previously amended) A gas laser according to claim 22, wherein the first set of threads comprises an externally threaded sleeve.
24. (original) A gas laser according to claim 16, wherein the tubular gripping portion comprises a shoulder that is interposed between the retainer and the optical element.

25. (original) A gas laser according to claim 16, wherein the optical element is selected from the group consisting of a fully reflective mirror, a partially transparent, partially reflective mirror, and a fully transparent window.

26. (original) A gas laser according to claim 16, further comprising a catch disposed on the exterior surface of the tubular extraction portion at an end opposite to the end connected to the gripping portion.

27. (original) A gas laser according to claim 26, wherein the catch is selected from the group consisting of a snap ring and a detent.

28. (original) A gas laser according to claim 16, wherein the gripping portion comprises an annular clip in which the optical element is received and a stop provided on the inner surface of the annular clip, said stop holding the optical element in the annular clip.

29. (original) A gas laser according to claim 28, wherein the stop is selected from the group consisting of a snap ring and a detent.

30. (previously amended) A gas laser according to claim 16, wherein the mounting structure comprises a flexible tube element comprising a base end an optical element receiving end, and a flexible section interposed between the base end and the receiving surface, and wherein the

optical element receiving surface is part of the flexible tube element, proximate the optical element receiving end.

31. (original) A gas laser according to claim 30, wherein the flexible section comprises a bellows

32. (original) A gas laser according to claim 30, wherein the base end is hermetically sealed to the first end wall around the port so that the optical axis of the laser passes through the flexible tube element.

33. (original) A gas laser according to claim 18, wherein the optical axis passes through the optical element at a point that is eccentric to the rotational axis of the optical element.

34. (original) A gas laser according to claim 19, wherein the optical axis passes through the optical element at a point that is eccentric to the rotational axis of the optical element.